

IIHMR University , JAIPUR | 2025

EXPLORING HEALTH INFORMATION- SEEKING BEHAVIORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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MBA 2nd YEAR

BACKGROUND

The digital era has reshaped health communication, with platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp enabling two-way health discussions and peer support (Heldman et al., 2013). Social media allows users—especially young adults and those with chronic conditions—to seek emotional support and health information in real time (Zhao & Zhang, 2017).

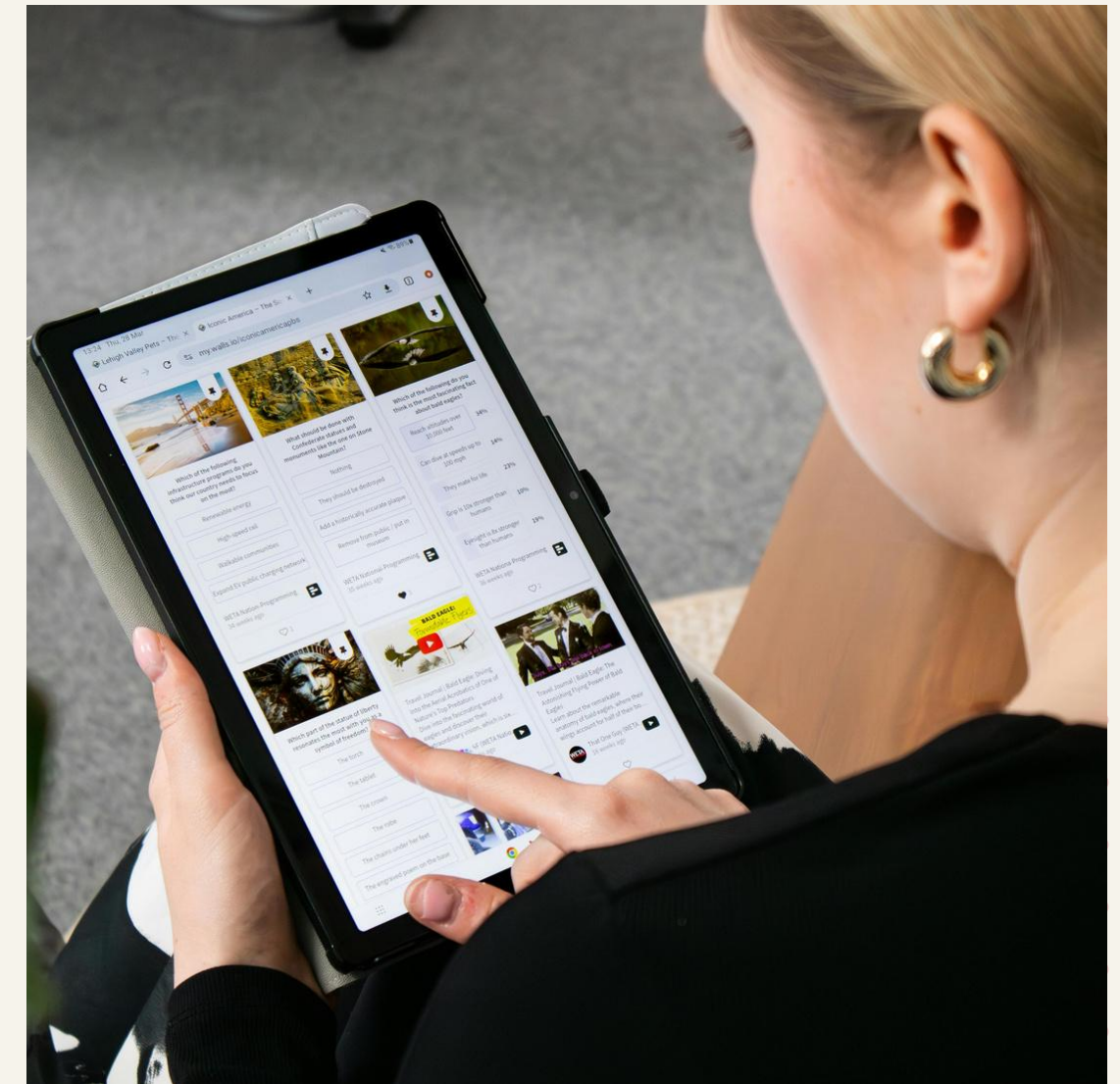
However, issues of credibility arise as users often rely on influencers and heuristics like likes or shares rather than expert advice (Jenkins et al., 2020). Despite risks such as misinformation, privacy concerns, and lack of regulation, users prefer social media for its accessibility, relatability, and peer-driven interaction—even while considering it less trustworthy than official sites.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Social media is widely used for health information, peer support, and treatment insights (Zhao & Zhang, 2017; Nath et al., 2016).
- Youth often trust influencers and social proof over experts on platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp (Khursheed & Rasul, 2024).
- Emotional support and personal experiences often outweigh factual accuracy in health discussions (Worrall & Oh, 2013; Westbrook & Zhang, 2015).
- Social media provides easier access to drug info and mental health peer support through anonymity and empathy (Benetoli et al., 2015; Naslund et al., 2016).
- However, misinformation and lack of content verification remain major concerns (Rutsaert et al., 2013).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

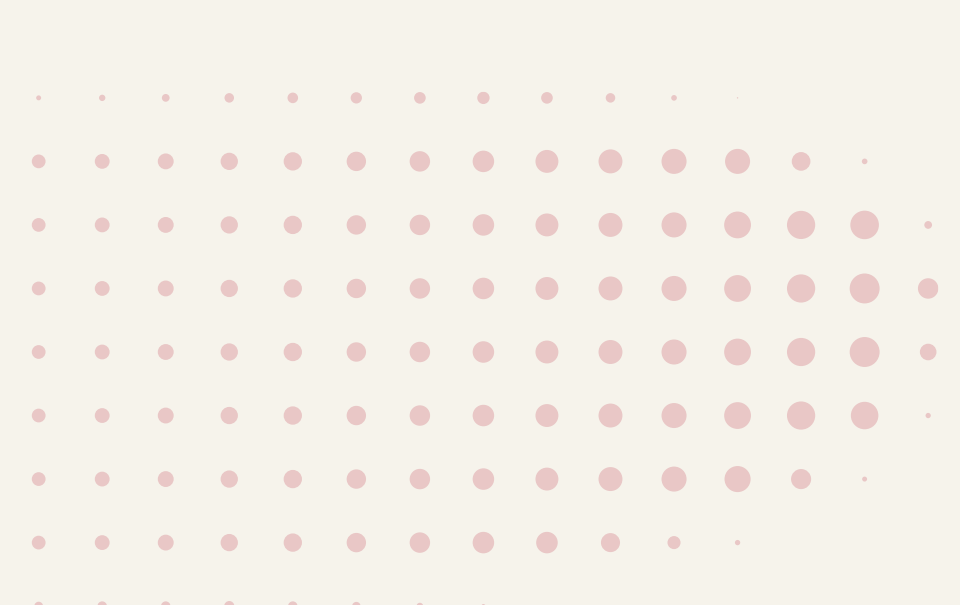
- Investigates how consumers use social media platforms (YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp) to seek health-related information.
- Explores user motivations, trust levels, and platform preferences.
- Examines how online health engagement influences users' health decisions, attitudes, and behaviors.



AIM OF THE STUDY

- Explore the influence of social media on consumers' health perceptions and decision-making.
- Examine the role of platform preference in shaping health information consumption.
- Assess how digital trust affects user engagement with health content.





RESEARCH QUESTION

How do consumers seek health-related information through social media, and what roles, benefits, and concerns are associated with this process?



RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1. To discuss the potential benefits and concerns associated with accessing consumer health information through social media.**
- 2. To identify concerns related to the quality and authority of health information found on social media.**
- 3. To examine the role that social media plays in consumers' information-seeking processes.**

METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

Cross-sectional quantitative survey using a structured online questionnaire for efficient, standardized data collection

Sampling:

Purposive sampling focused on relevant participants. Sample size is 245 respondents with response rate of 67.04%.

Study Setting & Population:

Conducted online targeting social media users aged 18+, with no restrictions on gender or location, who have engaged with health content online.

Instrument:

Five-section MCQ covering demographics, source trust, social media use reasons, emotional responses and preferred digital health communication methods.

METHODOLOGY

Data Analysis:

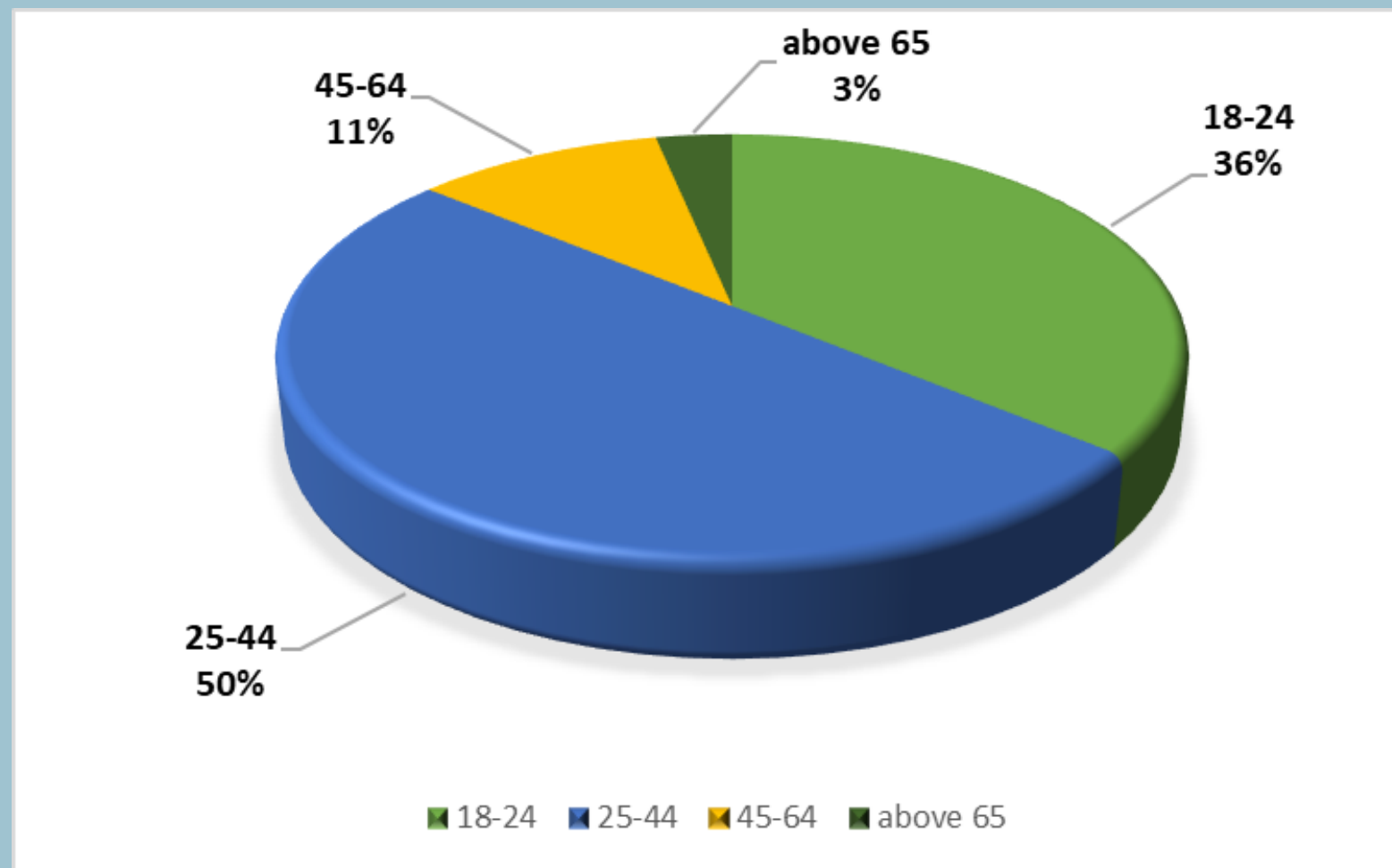
Descriptive stats (percentages, frequencies), inferential tests (e.g., chi-square) for demographic-behavior links, analyzed with SPSS/Excel.

Ethics:

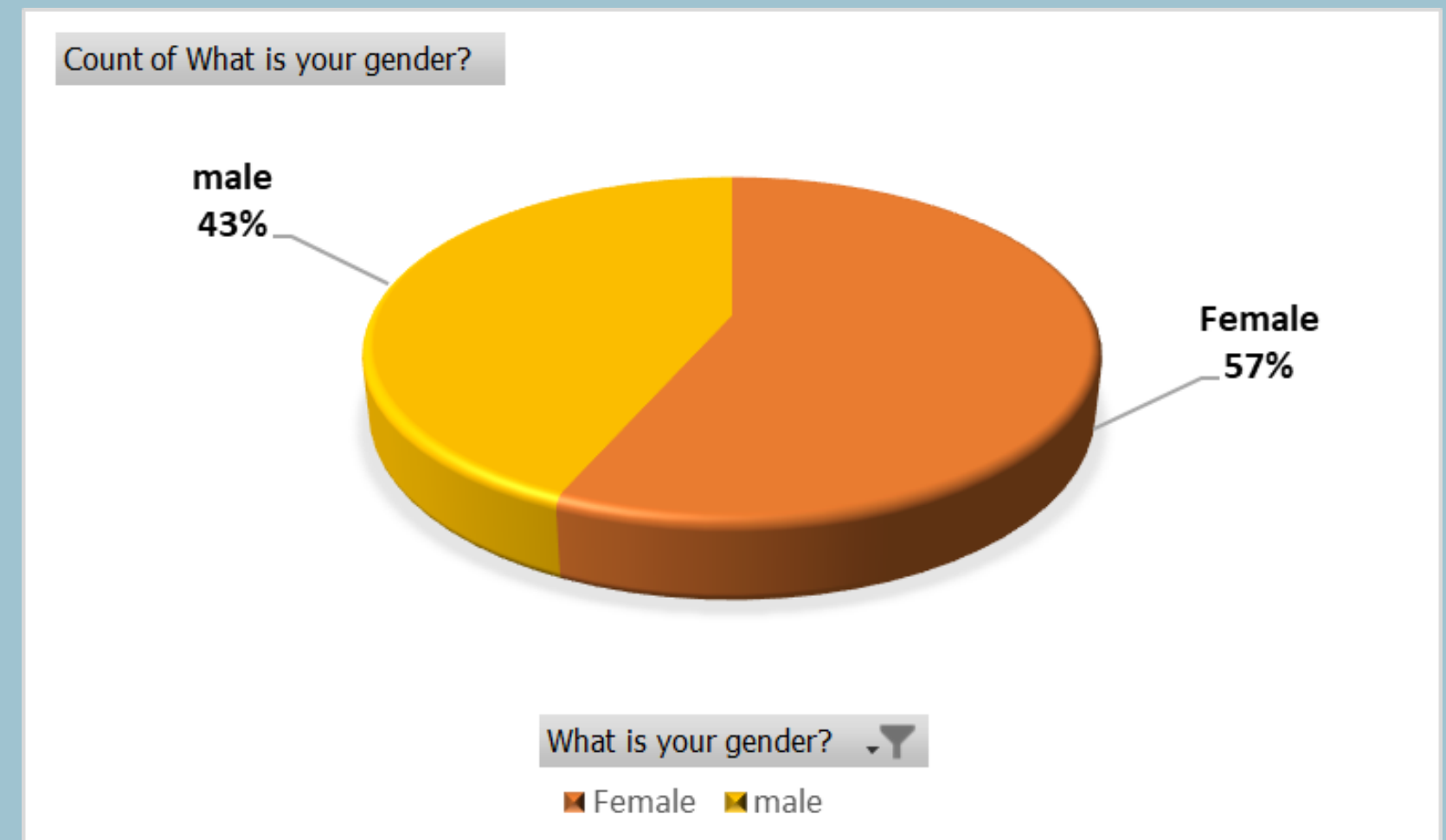
Voluntary participation with informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality ensured, no personal identifiers collected, data used only for academic purposes, no risks anticipated.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Age: 84% between 18–44 years

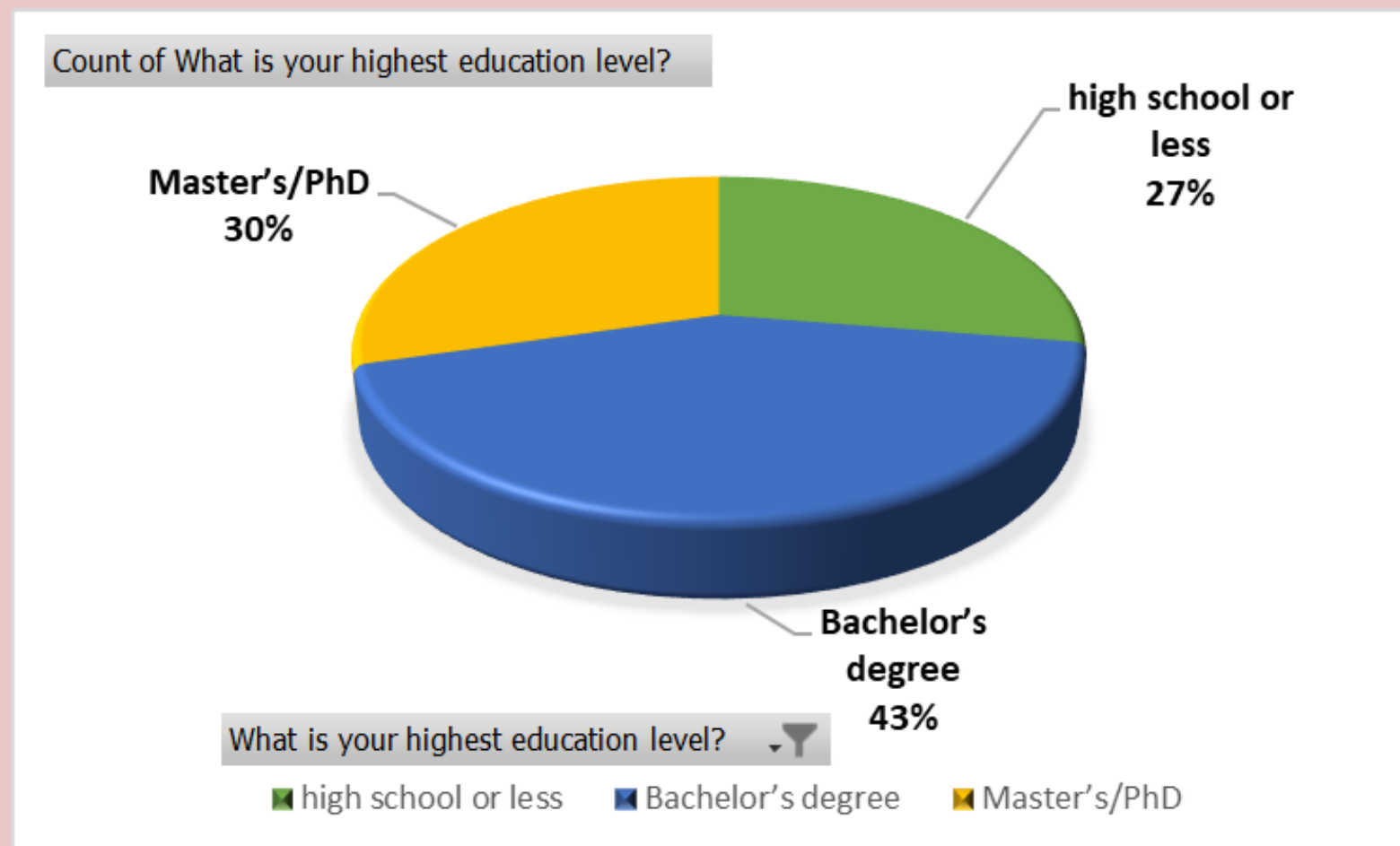


Gender: 57% Female

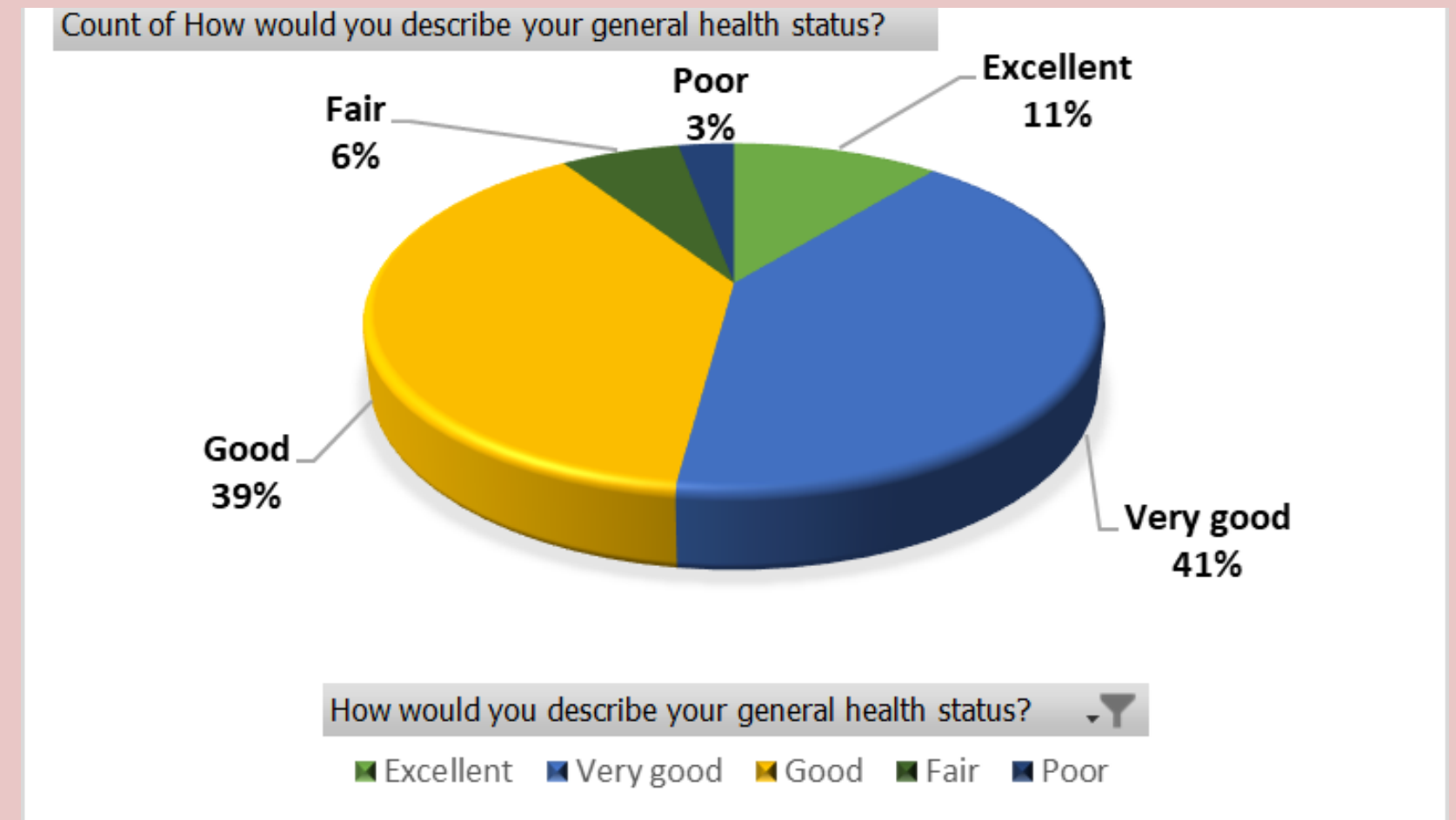


SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Education: 70% had Bachelor's or higher

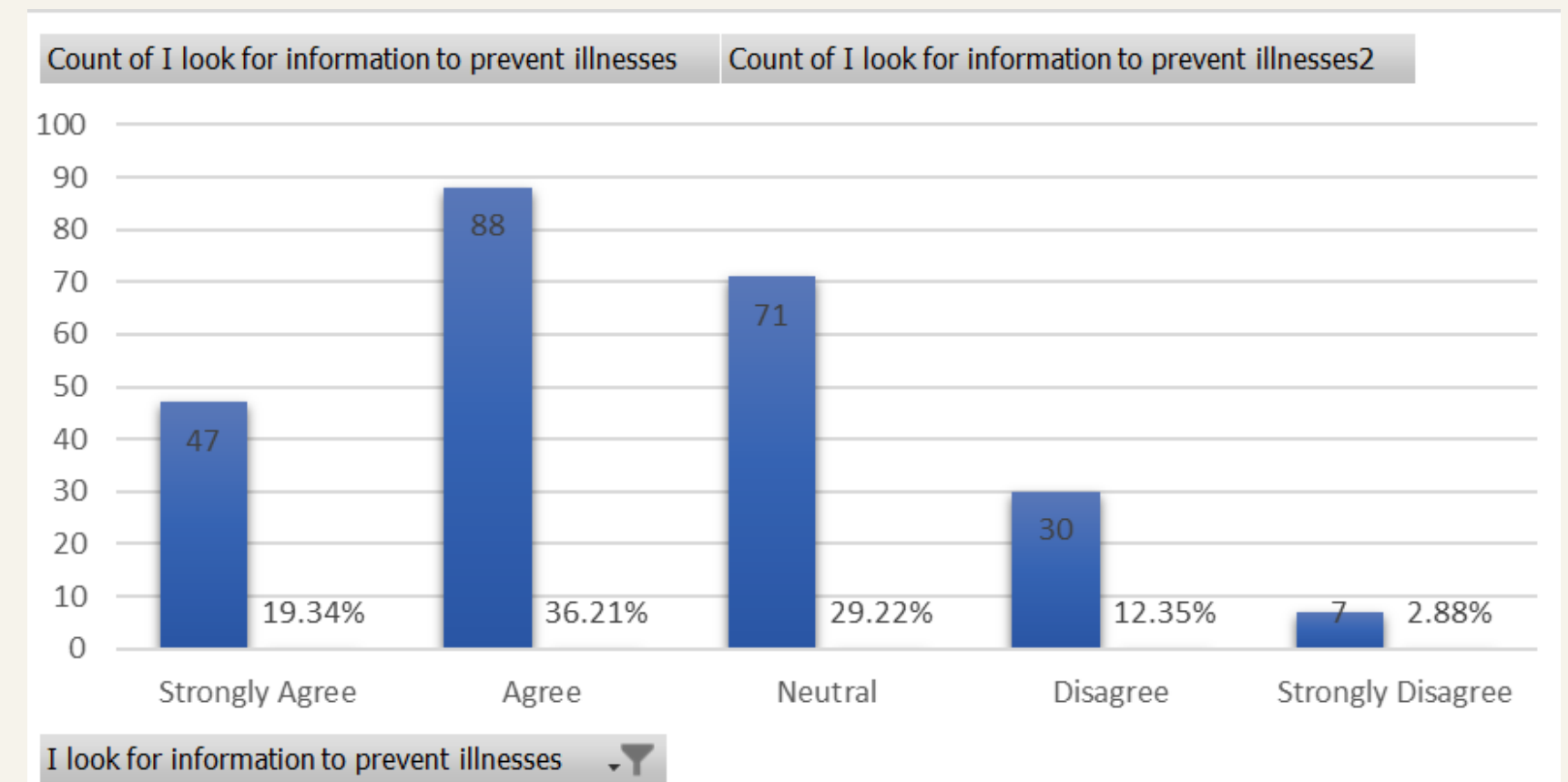
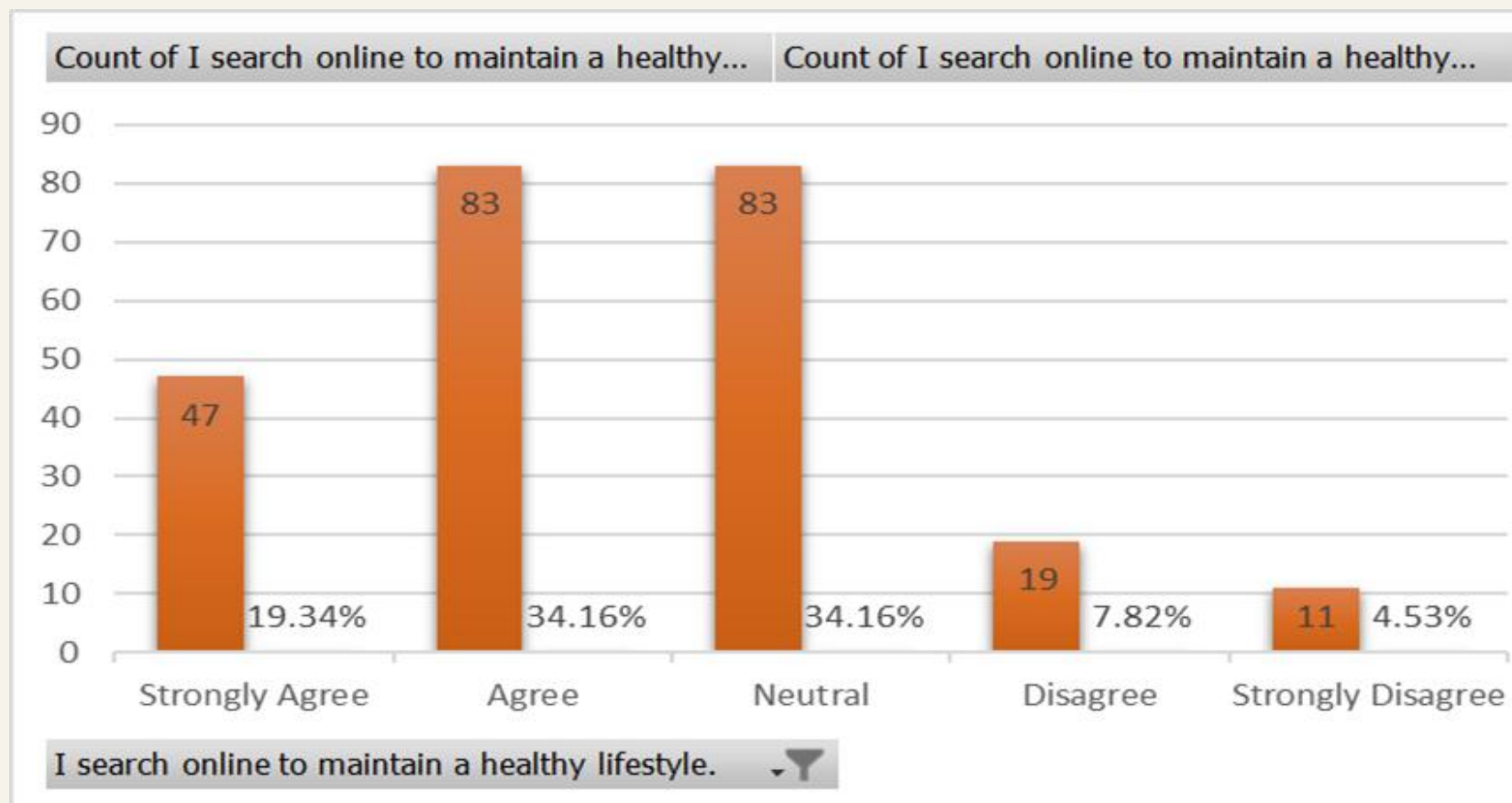


Health status: 88% rated health as Good/Very Good



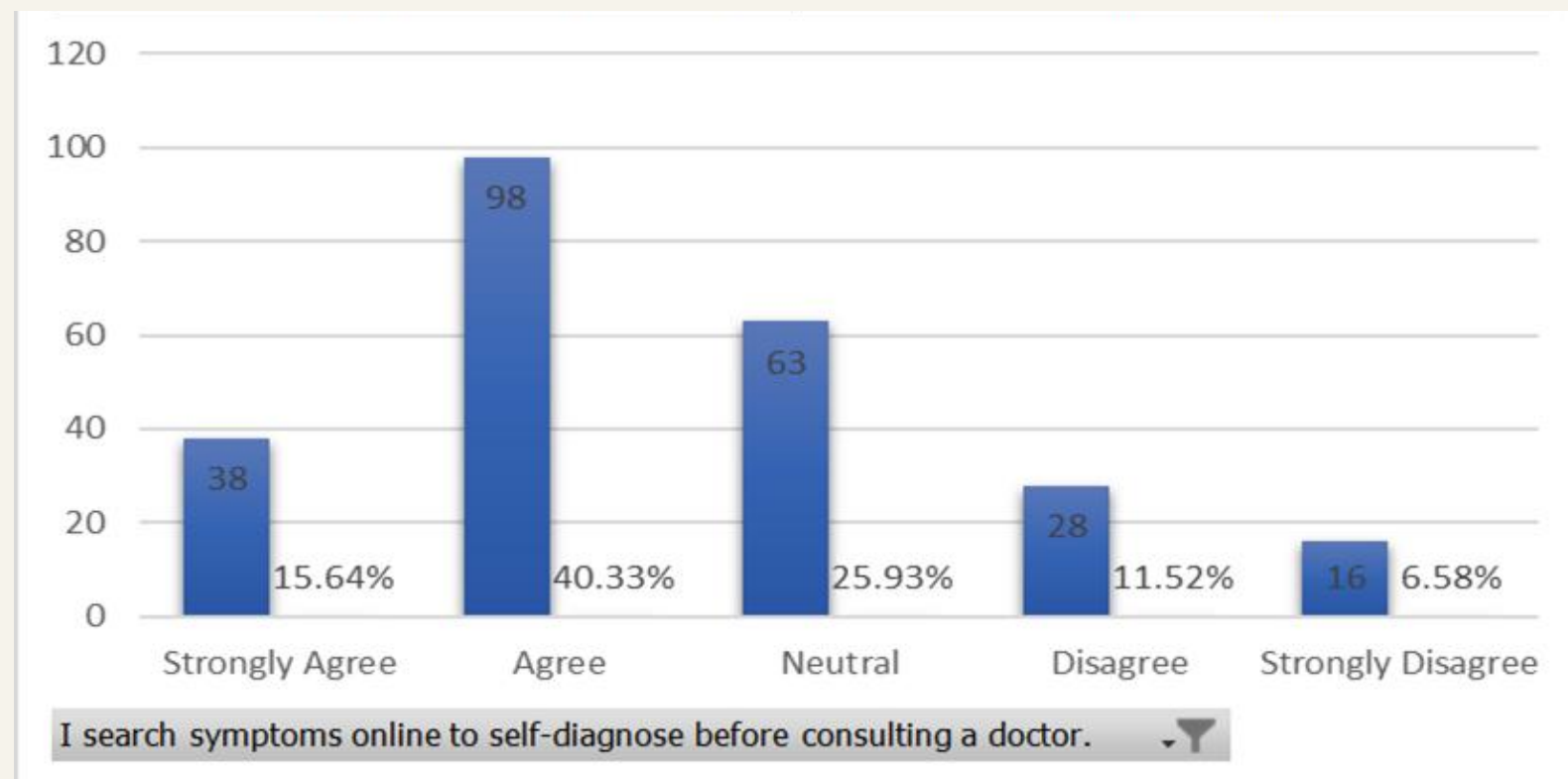
KEY FINDINGS – BEHAVIOR

50%+ search online for lifestyle & illness prevention

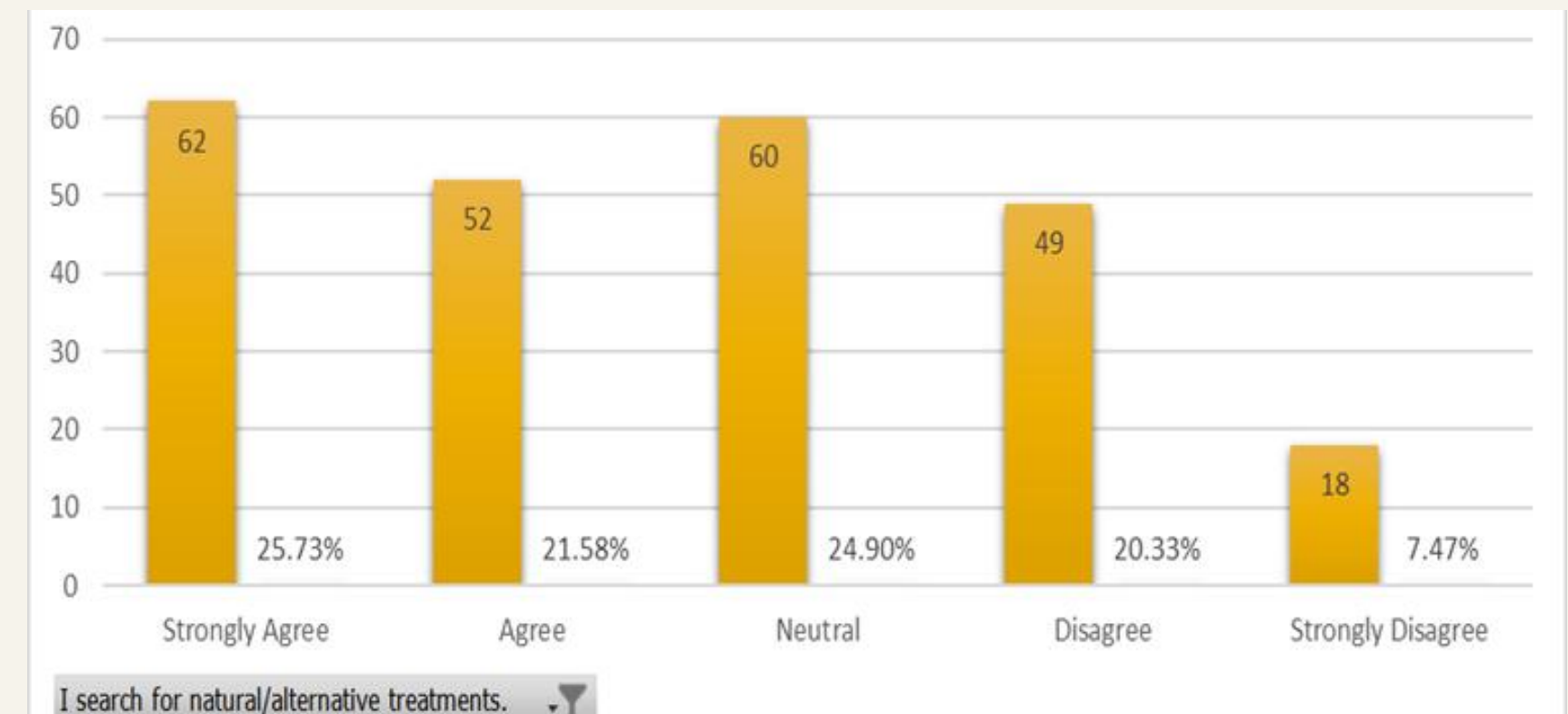


KEY FINDINGS – BEHAVIOR

55% self-diagnose using symptoms online



45% look for natural/alternative treatments



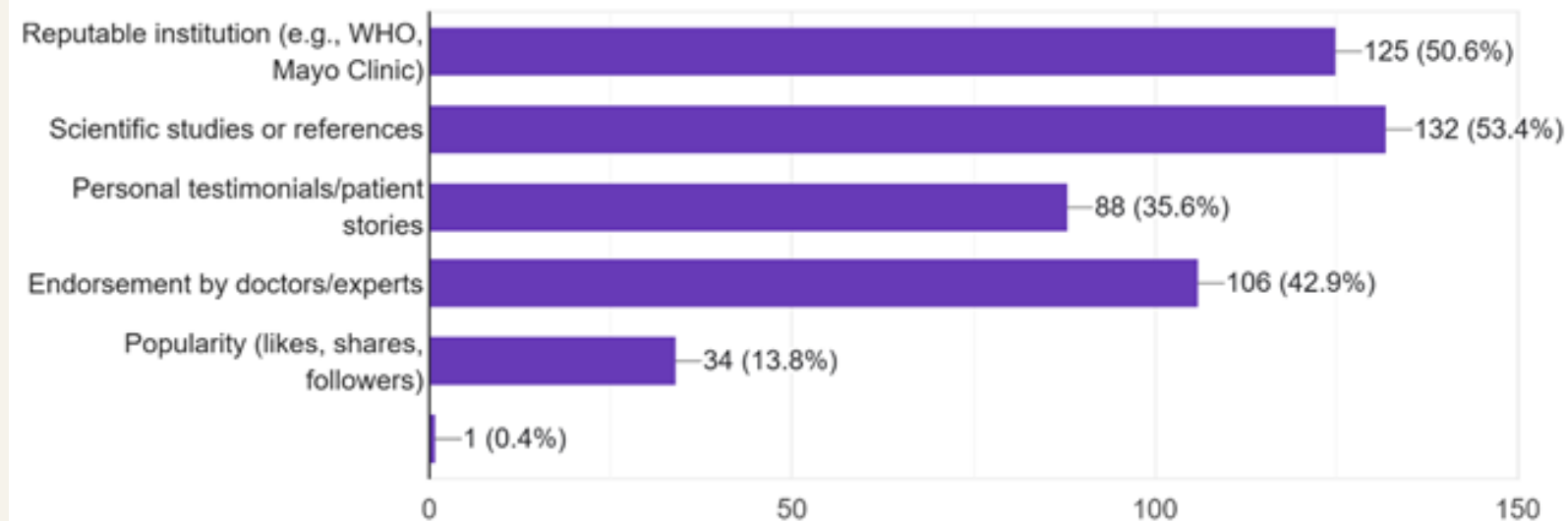
KEY FINDINGS – TRUST

Most trusted: Doctors (55%) & Health websites (WebMD, Mayo Clinic)

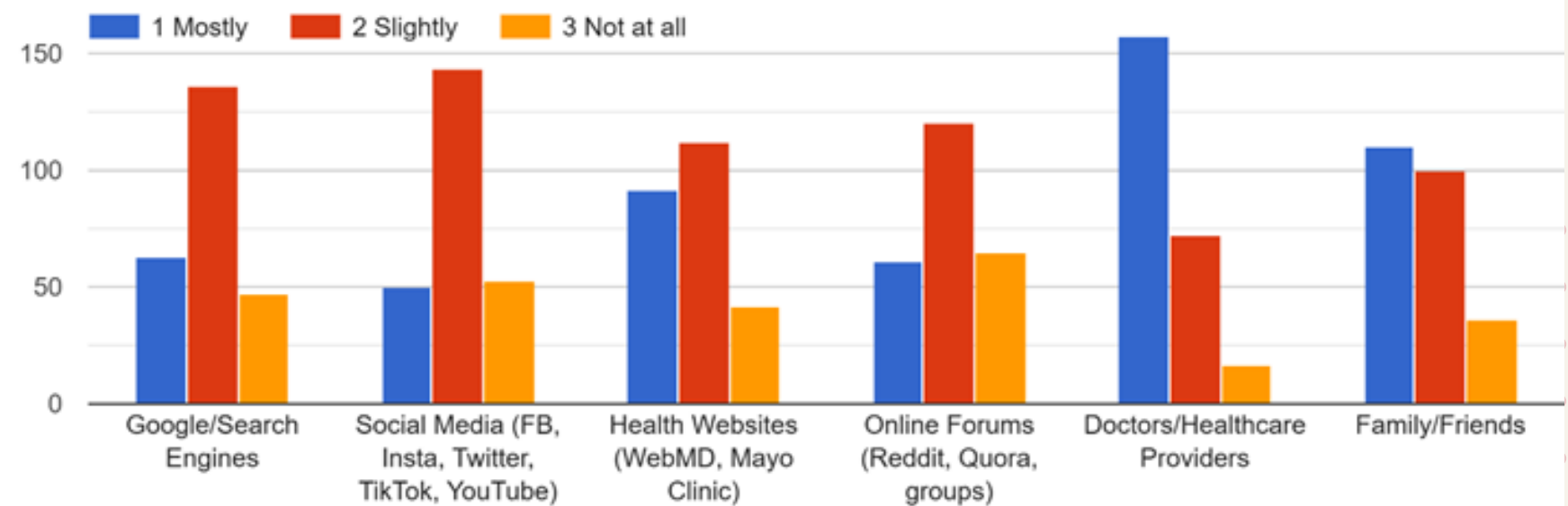
Least trusted: Social media & forums

What factors make you trust online health information? (Select all that apply)

247 responses

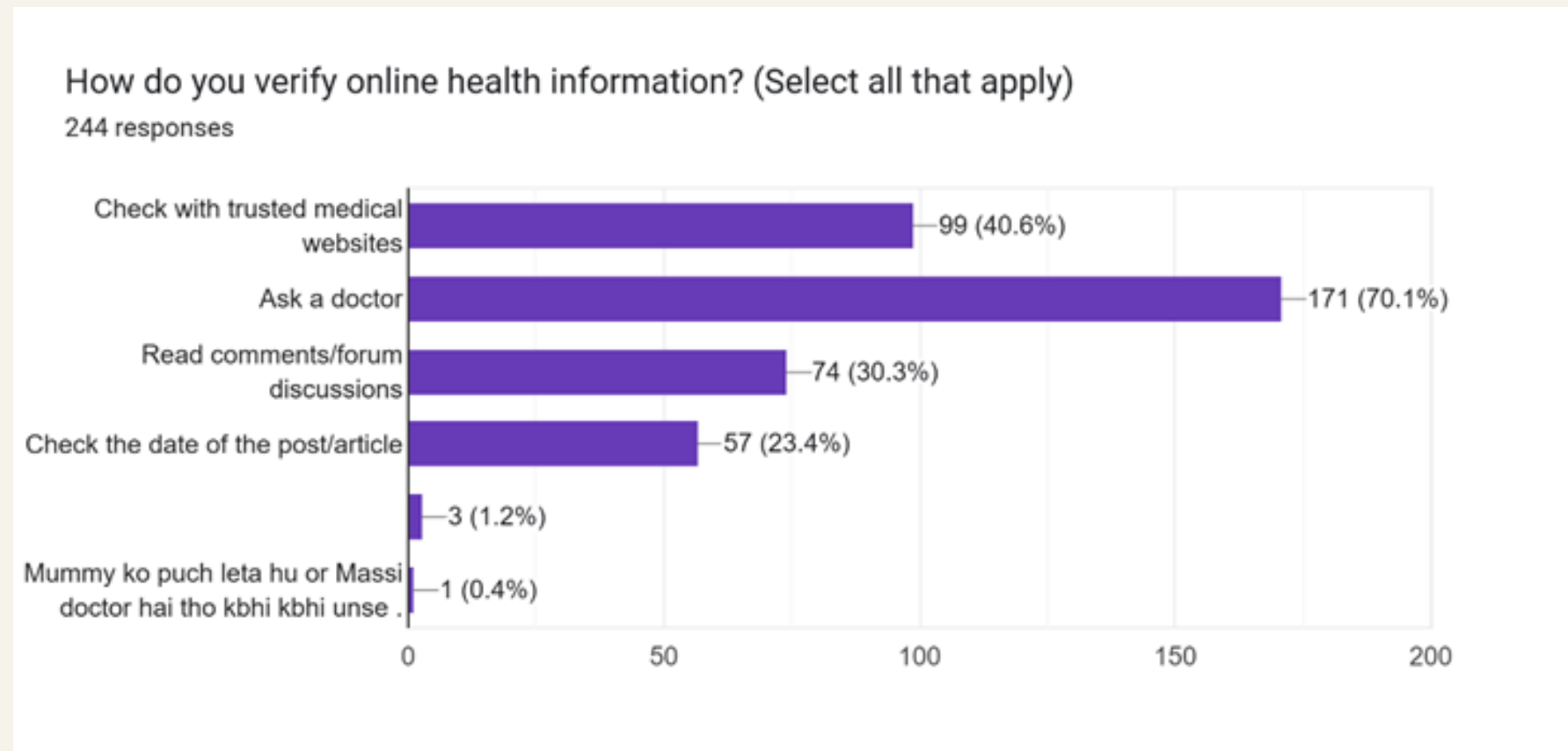


How much do you trust the following sources?

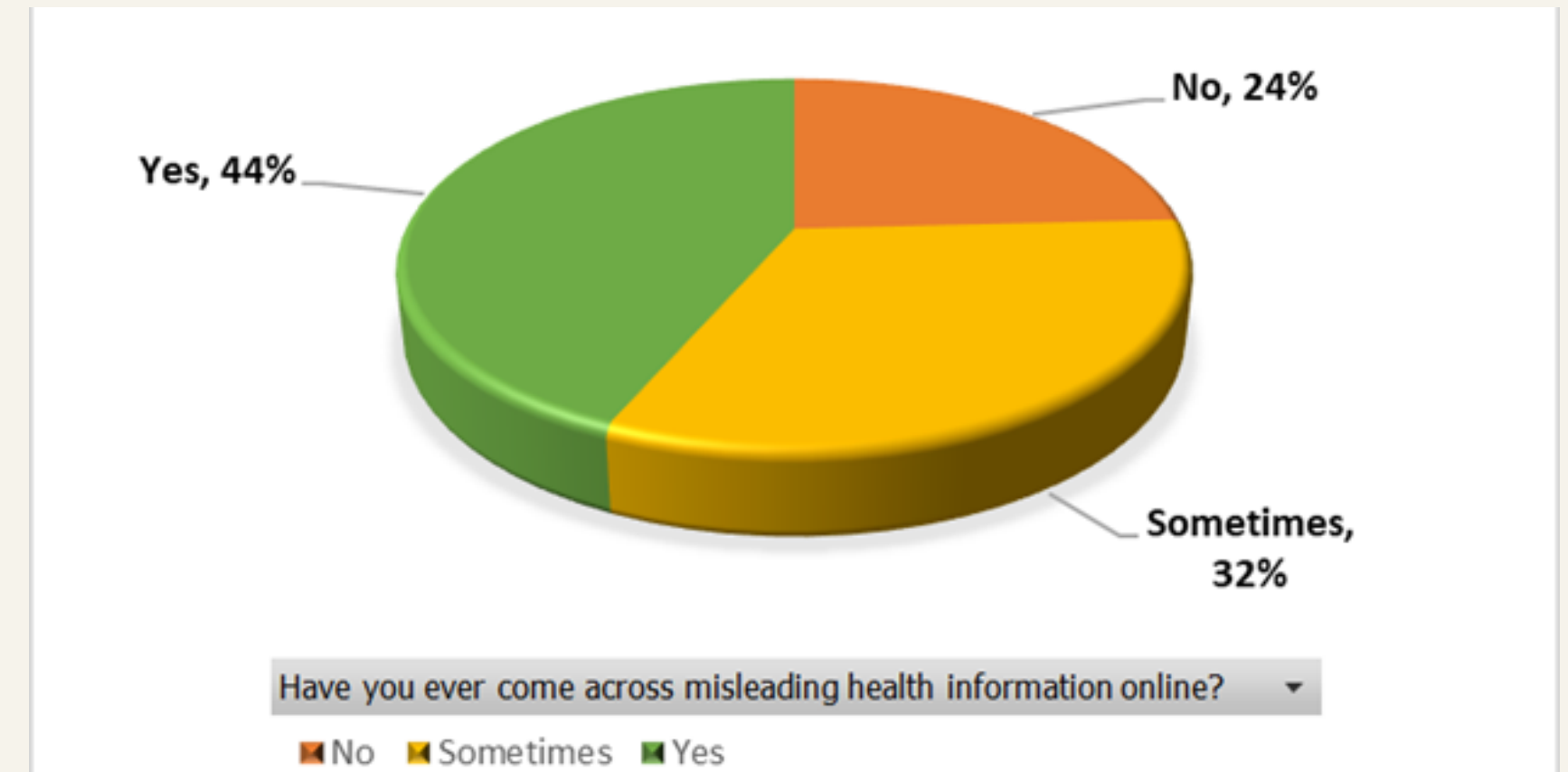


KEY FINDINGS – TRUST

70% verify information with doctors



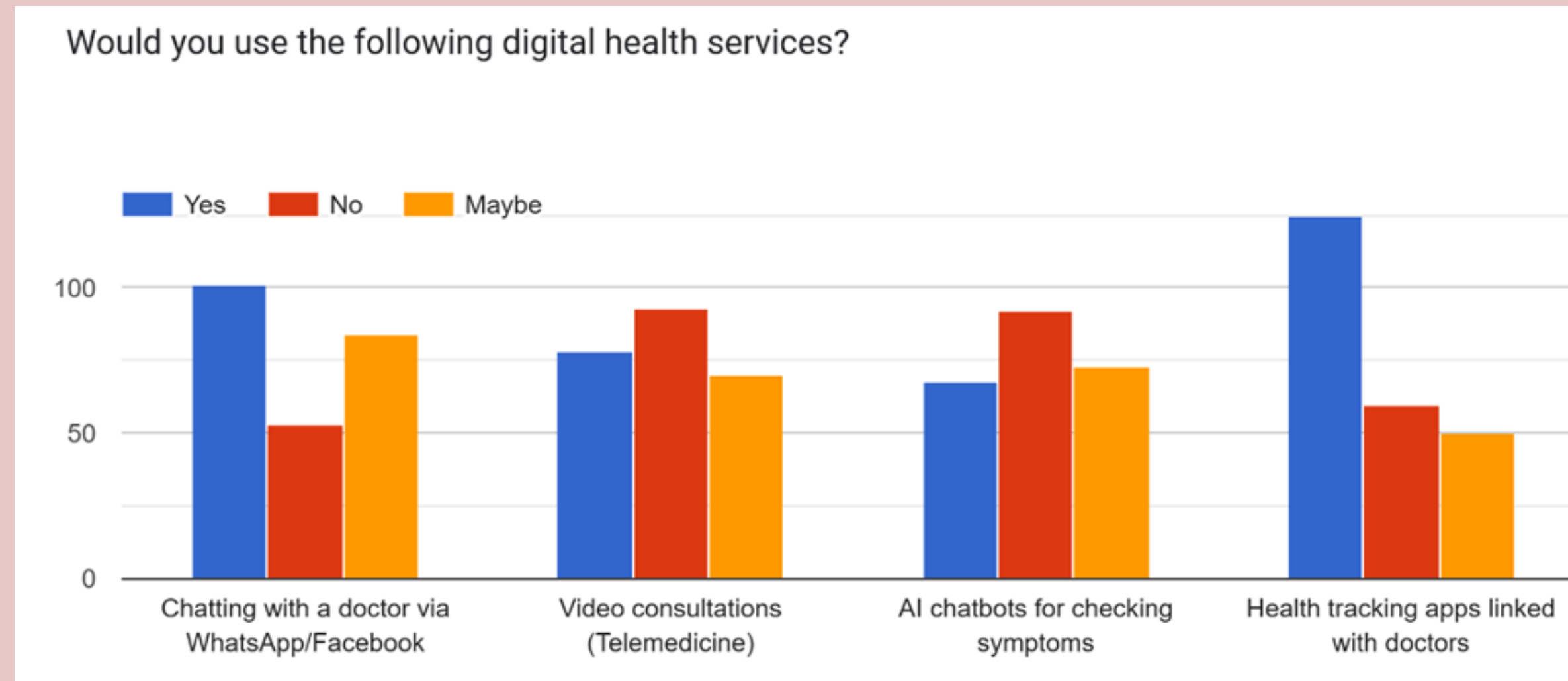
42% have seen misleading health info online



USE OF DIGITAL HEALTH SERVICES

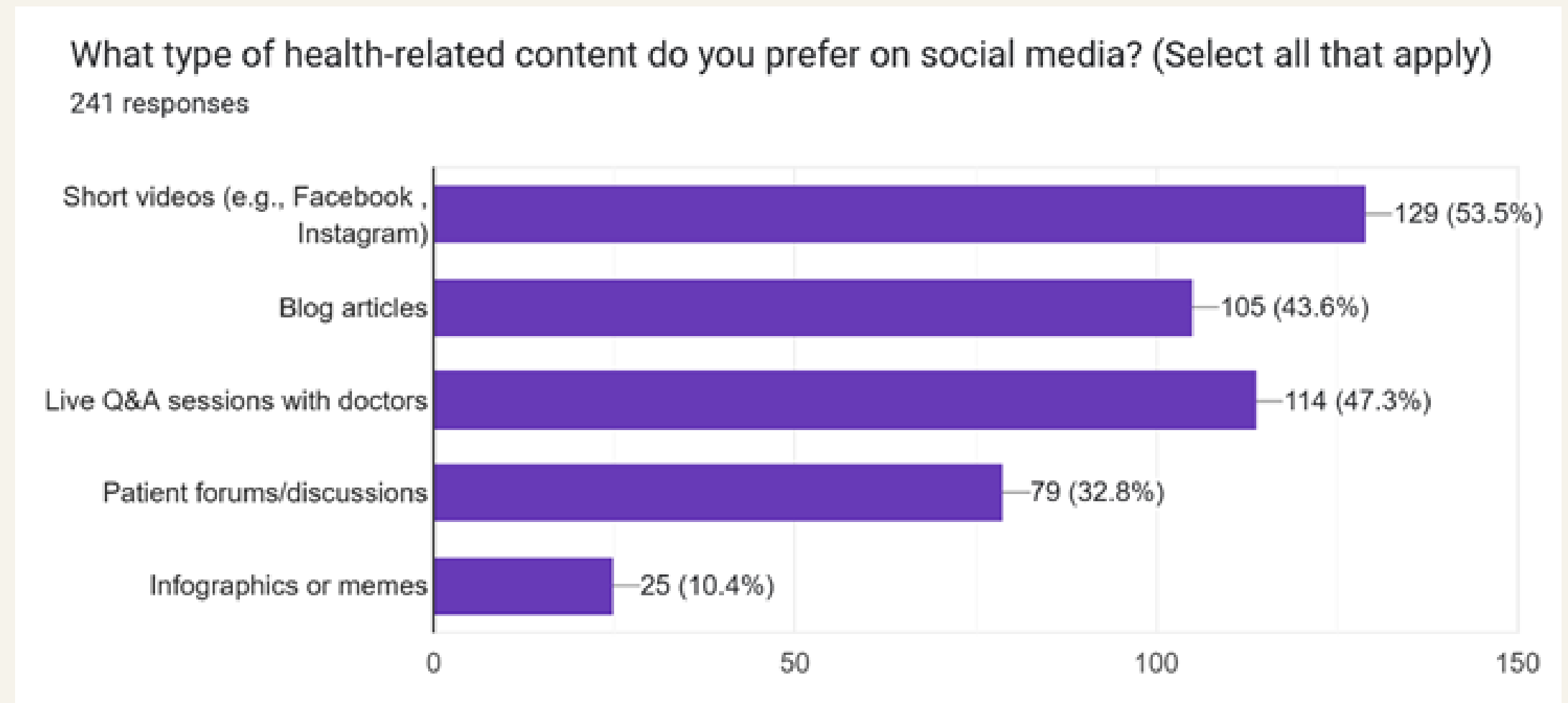
Most accepted: Health tracking apps (44%)

Popular: WhatsApp chat with doctors (36%)



PREFERRED CONTENT FORMATS

Short videos (54%)
Live Q&A with doctors (47%)
Blogs (44%)
Patient discussions (33%)
Infographics & memes (10%)



CONCLUSION

- Search engines & doctors are key info sources
- Social media is convenient but not credible
- Users are cautious and verify content
- Digital health tools are welcomed with trust filters



RECOMMENDATION

- **Enhance Digital Health Literacy**
- **Increase the Presence of Verified Health Experts Online**
- **Strengthen Content Regulation and Platform Policies**
- **Develop Trustworthy and User-Centric Health Apps**
- **Encourage Responsible Behavior Among Health Influencers**
- **Promote Interactive Digital Health Communication**
- **Support Culturally Relevant Communication Strategies**
- **Conduct Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation**

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THANK YOU

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